

HONOLULU BOY WRITES OF LIFE WITH CALIFORNIA'S GRIZZLIES

Leslie A. Hicks Says Regiment
Expects to See the French
Front in January

Interesting lights on the training life of the California Grizzlies, crack field artillery regiment of the Bear state, are shown in a letter received here this week from Leslie A. Hicks, graduate of the College of Hawaii last June, and star football man. Young Hicks is a corporal in the regiment.

Working his way to the coast last summer on one of the former German freighters that had been tied up in Honolulu, he arrived a trifle too late to join the regiment of Western engineers that formed last spring for duty in France. He had majored in engineering in the local college. A few weeks afterwards he enlisted in the California artillery.

"I am writing this in the Y. M. C. A. tent where some two hundred other fellows are doing likewise or talking and playing the phonograph," he says, "so this may be somewhat jumbled. Praises Army Y. M. C. A."

"While I think about it I want to say a word of appreciation for the Army Y. M. C. A. They have two large tents furnished with long tables and benches where the fellows congregate in the evenings to write letters and read the latest magazines. For the musically inclined there are a piano and phonograph.

"Every evening there is entertainment of some kind, vaudeville, moving pictures and so on. The boys certainly appreciate it, if you can judge by the enthusiastic applause they give all who try to entertain them.

"Every night the benches at the writing tables are packed with fellows who haven't forgotten the folks at home. For after the day's work is over and the sweat and dirt are washed off and a hearty meal stowed away and the old pipe is drawing smoothly, then a fellow's thoughts drift pleasantly homeward. Then the strain of fighting wind and dust and sun and plunging horses and cranky guns drops from your tired brain and body and you live in the past. The natural impulse is to write to those who are in your thoughts. If you are fortunate, as I am tonight, in finding ten inches of space unoccupied on the end of a bench.

"What shall I tell you about the grizzlies? If you have heard nothing of them you will want to know who and what they are.

"The grizzlies are a regiment of field artillery, organized and recruited without federal or state aid by the people of California. The regiment is made up of six batteries of about 75 men each and a medical corps, supply company and headquarters company. Each battery is to be equipped, very soon we hope, with four field pieces of a caliber corresponding to the French millimeter guns. The guns and its accompanying caisson are each drawn by a string of six horses. The horses are all saddled and a driver rides the near horse of each team, lead, swing and wheel. On the gun and its limber ride the gunner corporal and four gunners. On the caisson and its limber ride four extra gunners, while the caisson corporal rides a separate mount, boot-to-boot with the driver of the lead team of the caisson. The sergeant in command of the gun section is on a separate mount and rides boot-to-boot with the driver of the lead team of the gun, or piece, as it is technically named.

All Branches Represented

"A gun section thus consists of a gun, caisson, 12 horses, 14 men, 2 corporals and one sergeant. The balance of the two hundred men not in the four gun sections handle supplies and ammunition and do signal work,

scouting and so forth. I won't go any further into the work or organization of the battery for fear of boring you. Suffice it to say that the field artillery is the highest branch of the service outside of the medical and aviation corps, and it covers some of the work of every other branch of the service. We have the horses and revolvers of the cavalry, the foot drill and guard duty of the infantry, the semaphore and telegraph work of the signal corps, while the handling of field pieces and the ammunition parallels the work of the coast artillery corps, although it is not of as high order.

"To me it is the only service; I wouldn't belong to any other. It is free from monotony, full of life and dash and thrills. Also it requires a high degree of intelligence and offers a chance for advancement. The class of men in this regiment is unusually high. There are business men, professional men, college boys, farmers, cow punchers, miners, former soldiers, professional athletes, adventurers—anything you can think of. On second thought I could add a dozen vocations to the few I have named.

"Here are various ideals and ambitions, but two things are in common—youth and the desire to get to the front as soon as possible.

"Our officers are mostly men of wealth and position, in private life, who did good work in recruiting the regiment. They are all fine men and are well liked by the fellows but many of them have a lot to learn about their jobs. As far as that goes, we all have; and the sooner we learn it the sooner we will see active service. Every man is doing his best, and every day sees new improvement. The general opinion is that we will be in Europe by January or February at the latest.

Lively Young Non-Coms
"Our non-commissioned officers are mostly young fellows without much experience, but lots of enthusiasm and ambition. They are a hard class to beat. You simply can't hold them down.

"The best I have been able to do so far is to edge into a caisson corporal's job and hold it against all comers. And it's no cinch, either. I have to watch my step all the time. I have been at a little disadvantage, too. I came in late and a total stranger. No one of the other 1299 men knew whether I was a horse thief or a preacher.

"At present we are encamped at Tanforan, an old deserted race park about 10 miles south of San Francisco. It is anything but an ideal camping or training ground. When it isn't cold and foggy it's hot and dusty. It is always windy. I never saw the wind blow so fast in so many directions before. We sleep, eight men to a tent. The tents have no floors other than the good old earth or rather dust. The dust is in, on, around and all over everything we possess. We eat it and breathe it; it fills our eyes, ears, nostrils and throats. It is with us always; we would be lost without it. I have heard it said that a man eats a peck of dirt before he dies. If that were the only requirement for a passage into the next world, we would all have had fare tickets long ago.

"We cheer ourselves with the thought that we are going south to Linda Vista soon. We have been on the verge of 'going any day' for the last month.

"I don't know anything about Linda Vista, except that it is near San Diego. It may be worse than this place for all we know. But far fields always look green, so we are crazy to go there.

"We haven't our regular equipment yet. There are enough horses and guns in the regiment to man one battery, so we have to take turns using them. The horses are all has-beens and the guns are relics of the Spanish

"Dig In" With Your Brothers



War, but they do very well for us to wrestle with. We don't have to be afraid of injuring them, anyway.

"We expect to march in Frisco Friday in honor of the second increment of drafted men who are leaving. We will march in the parade like good soldiers, but won't feel much aloha for the 'honored ones'. They aren't very popular with us. They may have their own reasons for waiting to be drafted; they may have good positions, happy homes and loved ones they cannot bear to leave. But what of us? What of the thousands who have gone before? We have home ties, too. We have ambitions, hopes and desires which must wait the issue of this war for fulfillment. In the words of Sir Ernest Shackleton when he spoke in Honolulu last spring, we put aside 'love of money, love of comfort and ease, love of pleasure, love of woman' that we might prove our manhood by the fullness of our sacrifice.

"We have deliberately weighed the cost and thrown ourselves into the struggle. And now that the step has been taken and the doubt and uncertainty are over there is a clean, strong feeling of worthiness; a feeling that we have been tried and found wanting. Those of us who 'come back' may take up our lives where we left off, secure in the knowledge that we did our bit toward establishing for posterity a stronger and freer democracy than the world has ever known. Those of us who fail to 'come back' will pass on to a higher state of being where there are no wars, and will leave to those behind a thought that we did not live in vain."

AMERICANS KEEN TO MEET FRITZ IN REAL BATTLE

Adventurers Creep Up to British Trenches for Peep at Hun Troops.

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE BRITISH FRONT IN FRANCE, Sunday, Sept. 23.—On a historic battlefield which merges into the fighting lines are encamped many American troops, far removed from the rest of their compatriots, who form the vanguard of Uncle Sam's expeditionary force in France.

Some of them have been working continually in a zone covered by German guns, and already two of their number have been wounded, a fact whereof they are exceedingly proud.

They are a fine, healthy-looking lot, and nearly two months of hard work in the open under real campaigning conditions has put them in shape and they are ready for anything.

Especially are they prepared and anxious to try conclusions with the Germans. In fact, their only grievance is that for the present they are not permitted, except where necessity demands, to expose themselves to the enemy's big guns. They want to feel the thrill that one experiences when shells herald their approach across No Man's Land with a wicked whine which gives notice that in a fraction of a minute deadly bits of ragged steel will be flying in all directions. Stole Over to "Tommy's."

Until a stringent order was issued recently the American officers had a hard time keeping their men out of the British trenches. It is said that more than one American soldier has crept away, when off duty, and after making friends with the "Tommy's," has taken his place besides them for a few minutes while the minor battle was progressing.

The correspondent visited two camps and in each there were the same scenes of methodical activity characteristic of American methods. Things were moving smoothly and no false motions were being made. Efficiency was the by word everywhere.

It was noon when the second camp was reached and the officers and men were preparing for mess. Several clean cut young officers came out to greet the correspondent and it was a cherry welcome with a firm hand grip and a hearty "I'm mighty glad to see you." One would have known he was in an American camp had he been blindfolded. An invitation was extended to mess and it was accepted.

"I'm afraid we can't offer you very much to eat," said one officer. "You see, our cook is ill and just at this moment we are getting plenty of beans and—well, plenty more beans."

Ready for "Fritz".
In the course of the meal the correspondent fell into conversation with a young officer who comes from one of the famous and wealthy families of the United States.

"How do you like it out here?" asked the correspondent.

The officer gazed reflectively through the open door of the mess room. As far as the eye could reach there was a scene of devastation and desolation. Then he said:

"Well, it isn't exactly the same as Forty-second street and Broadway here, but we didn't come out looking for the 'Great White Way.' We are here for business and we like it—partly for itself and partly because we ought to like it.

"I think that some of our boys who have crept up and stolen a look at the fighting lines have been a little disappointed, in a way. Of course, they read of what it was like over here, but it did not seem quite right not to see banners flying on the battlefield

and not to witness troops moving out in the open."

The American quarters are very simple. One officer proudly displayed quarters that he had built out of airplane wings which had been discarded by the British and had been presented to him by a colonel.

New Yorkers Attention

Former residents of New York State are invited to meet at the home of Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Lowrey, corner Lunatic and Victoria streets, on Monday, Oct. 22, 4:30 p. m. Object: Formation of a club to take part in entertaining New York enlisted men as planned by Women's War Council. 6919—Oct. 17, 19, 20.

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